

PUTTING

Human Social Services

TOGETHER

Tearsheet requests to Office of Communications and Public Affairs, HSMHA, 17A-55, Parklawn Building, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Md. 20852

In response to public demand for more and more human services, the Federal Government has created a host of assistance programs designed to meet a variety of human needs. The programs were established one by one, and each was devised separately to alleviate a given problem, but usually without regard to other programs.

This system of categorical programs tends to separate people into narrow and rigid groups. For example, the father of a family is helped by one program, his child by another, and his elderly parents by a third. A mother goes to one place for nutritional services, to another for health services, and to a third for job counseling.

In effect, a compassionate Government has unwittingly created a bureaucratic jungle that baffles and shortchanges many citizens. The administrative snarl wastes taxpayers' money and frustrates efforts to help the individual person.

According to Mr. Elliot Richardson, Secretary

of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), eight out of every 10 men, women, or children who need help from HEW need more than one kind of help. The Department of HEW is responsible for more than 270 specialized programs of human assistance administered by dozens of State and local agencies. People often get lost in the process if they can get in it at all.

People are now demanding a change. Proponents of change include HEW employees, social service workers, health and education specialists, government leaders, and people in need. They all agree that the Department needs to go back to viewing people as whole individuals and treating them in a way which eliminates waste and duplication and still gets the job done.

The difficulty, Secretary Richardson has observed, does not lie with the professional people who are trying to help. The physicians, educators, and social workers in the system are frustrated by it, and the better and more caring they do, the more frustrated they are. It is the system that should be changed.

The Allied Services Act, a measure which the Department of HEW has sponsored and President Nixon has introduced, would change the system. For all intents and purposes, the act is a new

approach to the delivery of health, education, and welfare services.

The act would give State and local officials authority to consolidate the planning funds of the many separate social service programs into streamlined, comprehensive plans. Each plan would be custom designed for a particular area. Such plans could eventually make it possible to assess the total human service needs of an entire family at a single entry point. Most applicants need more than one service and now must trudge from one office to another.

The act defines various key terms. For instance, the term "human services" includes any services provided to achieve or maintain personal and economic independence. The "coordinated provision of services" means the provision of human services needed by individuals and families in such a way as to (a) facilitate access to the use of the services, (b) improve the effectiveness of the services, and (c) use service resources more efficiently and with minimal duplication.

A summary of the bill's advantages and major provisions follows.

For the people served, the act would:

1. Provide for comprehensive problem diagnosis and service planning.
2. Enable a range of services to be accessible through integration of separate service institutions.
3. Transfer the burden of responsibility for getting appropriate services assistance from the people to the system.
4. Improve convenience through consolidation and simplification of forms and procedures.

For governmental effectiveness, the act would:

1. Bring State and local elected officials more directly into the delivery of services business.
2. Encourage the creation of State and local integrated service plans through a project planning grant authority.
3. Authorize the Secretary of HEW to waive categorical, regulatory, and technical provisions which impede the integration of services.
4. Insist as a prerequisite for State planning aid that common service areas be established.
5. Authorize the Secretary to consolidate the planning of all HEW administered programs, in-

cluded in State and local Allied Services programs, into a single planning grant.

6. Permit the transfer of funds among specified HEW programs to achieve maximum effectiveness.

How the Bill Will Work

- As a first step, the Governor of a State must choose to participate and designate common service boundaries.
- Local plans would be developed by local elected officials, or combinations thereof, which would involve the various public and private providers of human services.
- Local plans would be consolidated by the Governor into a State plan for approval by the Secretary of HEW.
- A minimum of four human services programs, including the public social services program, must participate in State and local Allied Services plans.

Assistance Provided in the Bill

- Make available Federal assistance in the form of planning and implementation grants, fund transfer, and waiver authority, for State and local officials.
- Provide incentives for the planning and implementation of goals rather than impose mandatory nationwide standard requirements.
- Authorize State and local elected officials, once plans are approved, to transfer up to 25 percent of HEW funds between programs included in the plan, depending on their priorities.
- Permit the Secretary of HEW to waive statutory or regulation-based restraints and provide grants to cover start-up administrative costs of putting these systems in operation.
- Empower the Secretary and the States to consolidate the planning authorities of the programs participating in State and local Allied Services plans.

The Cost

- It is estimated that up to \$20 million would be required for planning and implementation grants in the first full year.
- Federal programs subject to being coordinated under the Allied Services Act involve several billion dollars.